

Scripture Reading:

Please go ahead and turn in your Bibles to **James 1, James 1** for our scripture reading today... We are in **James 1:2-8** for ...And I will ask you to please stand if you are able to do so for the reading of God's Word...

James 1:2-8

² Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various ^[e]trials, ³ knowing that the testing of your faith produces ^[d]endurance. ⁴ And let ^[e]endurance have *its* perfect ^[f]result, so that you may be ^[g]perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

⁵ But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and ^[h]without reproach, and it will be given to him. ⁶ But he must ask in faith without any doubting, for the one who doubts is like the surf of the sea, driven and tossed by the wind. ⁷ For that man ought not to expect that he will receive anything from the Lord, ⁸ *being* a ^[i]double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.

Introduction:

Good morning...Thank you for being here...I always enjoy being here at Calvary with this great church family...

If you do not know, My name is Byron Bradshaw and I am privileged to be the pastor here...If you are new here or visiting or if you want to become a member please feel free to approach me after the service in the hallway...

Thank you to all those who have worked hard on decorating the sanctuary and to all those who have worked hard on the cantata and all the children's area. Church is a team effort and we have a great team here at Calvary...

Before we enter the text this morning, let us go to God in prayer...

Let Us Pray

ME: (introduction)

This morning I'd like to talk to you about Enduring Trials...Enduring Trials...

Now, I think we would all agree...Trials are a fact of life..If you live long enough you WILL experience trials...

Trials, difficulties, temptations, struggles, addictions, or even flat out exhaustion are inescapable truths of the reality of life...

I imagine every single person in here...I mean every single person in here has experienced trials...Perhaps some of us walk around with scars...physical and emotional scars that tell stories of wounds and trials we faced...

Many of you have faced unimaginable difficulties in life and through the few months of being here I've heard many stories of endurance and faithfulness to God in spite of being in a wretched dark valley...

Transition: As I begin...I'd like to share with you a personal story...of the most difficult trial

Laurel and I have ever faced...

ME:

It was a normal Sunday morning that turned not so normal...It began as a normal Sunday morning...Getting up before my family, I got ready for church...Tip toeing around trying not to wake my sleeping family...Showered, shaved, and dressed up...Off I went half asleep with my coffee in hand...Heading to church imagining this Sunday was just another normal day in the life of a pastor...

I showed up that morning to the youth house at Southside...Set up the house for the Sunday school lesson to the half asleep students sure to come...Waiting for them to arrive I reviewed my lesson while listening to worship music...

Students began to trickle in over the course of 15 minutes or so and soon we began our lesson in The Book of Genesis...

Turn: However, what began as a normal Sunday morning quickly turned...During the Sunday school lesson, my phone began to ring...Initially, I thought it was a bit weird because who calls a pastor on a Sunday morning...

I let my phone ring at first without looking at its caller...

Then, my phone began ringing a second time...Upon the second call, I knew something was wrong...

Right in the middle of my Sunday school lesson, I look at my phone for what's the matter...I walked over to my phone and saw Laurel's name posted on my phone...

As soon as I saw her name, I knew something was wrong...

I picked up the phone and began walking outside...My wife frantic on the other end of the phone said to me, "Byron, your son is dead..." My body physically collapsed right there and of course my eyes began to pour...

The greatest wound and trial of my life rushed in...

I walked back inside to the youth house where I was teaching...My face visibly distraught...I walk in and said, "Um...My son is dead I got to go..."

The first time I saw my two year old boy, Byron jr, was in the emergency room at Huntsville

Hospital Women's and Children Emergency Room...and as I saw him through the closing doors I saw his body...And sure enough he was gone...

The agony of our unbearable trial and pain was so unimaginable that I cannot even begin to convey the emotions nor the weight of that day to anyone here this morning...

...(Pause) **To that point, I had faced trials...**But that day trumps all my days...That day I knew what it meant to endure...

That day was September 20th of 2015...The trial and day that changed all our days...

Transition: Yet, as I look out upon this crowd, I know I am not the only one to have lost a child...I know I am not the only one to have lost a loved one...I know I am not the only one here that has walked through dark valleys perhaps even questioning the very core of what I believe....I know that I am not the only one to face tragedy, test and trial...

Transition: Perhaps some of you...the current trial you face is not one of a lost loved one but perhaps there are some here this morning who face a trial through persecution...

WE:

Persecution: Some of us in this room have **faced the trial of** persecution for our faith...Perhaps some of us have been ostracized by family members for our decision to become servants of Jesus who is Christ, Lord and God...

...Or, perhaps some of us have faced the trial of

Financial Ruin- where all your life's work seems cast into the sea while burning before your eyes...

...Or, perhaps some of us have faced the trial of

Divorce- perhaps your heart was ripped out of your chest by your spouse to put on a silver platter to have a knife driven through it...Perhaps your marriage ended in ruin leaving you forever scarred and weighed down by the root of bitterness and hatred...

...Or, perhaps some of us have faced the constant, persistent issue of an addiction

An Addiction-...the conscious pulling and tension of fighting against the urges of our flesh all while the hammer of guilt and shame wait for us around the corner...

Transition: Let's face it...Everyone in this room has faced trials, temptations or tragedies in some form or fashion...

Transition: Yet, the question this morning is not “If” but rather “How?...When we the certainty of trials come our way...How do we endure? How do we endure as Christians in the face of any temptation, tragedy or trial that comes our way...? Well, today James answers that very question.

So, come with me to James 1...And in James 1 James provides us 5 Steps to endurance...We will examine Step #1 and #2 this morning in verses 2-4 and next week we will look at Steps #3, #4, and #5 found in verses 5-12...

Step #1 and Step #2 are found in the two Greek commands found in verses 2-4...

Let us begin with Step #1 found in James 1:2

GOD:

James 1:2 states, “Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials,”

Before we talk about this word consider, I find it helpful to first dig into the Greek of the second phrase, “When you encounter various trials...”

The second phrase in verse 2 literally reads, “ὅταν πειρασμοῖς περιπέσητε ποικίλοις,” – whenever you more literally “fall upon” = “περιπέσητε” any of the kinds of trial...

The word “trials” here in verse 2 is the Greek word “πειρασμοῖς” which can mean literally refer to a test, trial or even temptation...

In other words...Whenever, Wherever, however you come upon trials, tests or temptations... What should we do?

Transition: Look back at the beginning of verse 2,

Read James 1:2, “Πᾶσαν χαρὰν ἠγήσασθε,” or Consider it all joy... How do we endure trials of any shape which come at any time?

Step #1: Consider...We must consider...What does it mean to consider?

The Greek word for “consider” is “ἠγήσασθε” which literally means to engage in an intellectual process or decision...That when we encounter a trial of any form...

We must try to take a step back out of the emotions and make a conscious intellectual decision to consider or to reason it to be joyful...

But the word “Consider” is not just interesting because of its meaning but also its parsing... Where the color really comes in is that this word is a Greek verb parsed as an aorist tense active voice imperative mood...

The imperative mood tells me it is a command... Yet the aorist gives me additional color...

What does the aorist tense tell me?... The aorist tells me that the intellectual process of considering trials to be joyful happens at one specific moment in time...

In other words... There comes a point in time where you must make the decision...(Pause) we must make a conscious intellectual decision at a particular, single moment in time to be joy in the midst of trial...

Additionally, when you factor in the active voice it tells us it is a decision “I must make”... That God does not come down out of the clouds and force me to make the decision nor will He necessarily pester us to make...

Listen friends...In order to endure...we must step out of the quick sand of despair and escape the weight of your emotions (not ignore our emotions) but rather step out of them for a moment in time and make an intellectual purposeful decision to consider the trials, temptations and tragedies to be joyful...

I love what one commentator says, “A large part of the life of faith is one’s attitude towards things in life and one’s response to events. We often can do little to control our environment and the things that happen to us, but we CAN CONTROL the way we think about them and how we react to them...Knowing how to interpret events and actions is a large part of wisdom and the faithful attitude of the Christian is one of joy...”¹

So, Step #1 is to Consider...To take a step out of our emotional waves of fears and doubts and make a conscious intellectual decision to be joyful...

But LET US BE HONEST FOR A SECOND... Or Allow ME TO SAY WHAT WE ALL ARE THINKING...

You know what I want to say to James? YA RIGHT...Because on the surface James seems

¹ Dan G. McCartney, *Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament: James*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2009), 84.

to say that in the moment of trial that I need to consider it joyful...More personally James on the surface seems to be saying to me...

“Byron, at the very moment of your son’s death you are to be joyful...” And on the surface I want to scream at James and tell him YA RIGHT

But friends I am not so certain this is the encompassing truth...

Listen, I do not believe James is refraining us from grieving loss...For God has created us to be emotional beings for He himself is emotional...

Grieve the loss of a loved one...Grieve the loss of a spouse or grieve the weight of a financial collapse...

Listen Friends, There is a time to grieve...Just don’t stay there...Let us not wallow in the valley of despair...**Grieve, yes grieve...But One day...**in the near future take a step out of the valley and make a conscious intellectual decision to be joyful...

The underlying foundation of one’s emotion must be joy even if the storm above can be intense...

Transition: And, fortunately for us, James explains himself... James does not leave us with a Greek command in verse 2...but He then gives us the reason to be joyful during any form of trial

Look at verse 3 with me...

“Consider it all joyful, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, Verse 3, Knowing (Continuous aspect) that the testing of your faith produces endurance...”

Why should we make a conscious decision to be joyful? Because trials lead to endurance...

Observation #1: Be joyful because trials lead to endurance...

Yet, I’d like to make a second observation about verse 3...Notice with me something very interesting...There is an underlying assumption James has in verse 3...

“Knowing (Continuous aspect) that the testing of your faith produces endurance...” What is the underlying assumption?

Observation #2: Trials lead to testing one’s faith...

Listen Friends...In other words, it is very natural to question your faith in the midst of

trials...

Personal: I've heard soooooo many people over years when they encounter a trial...They say something like this to me... "What is wrong with me?"...or "Why am I doubting everything I believe in...?"

Based on verse 3 it is a natural part of life to question your faith when tragedy strikes...And if one endures then faith is strengthened...

In fact I'd like to take it further...**Faith that is not tested in trials is not faith**...(Pause) Because Biblical faith is based on a relationship...Anytime difficulty comes into a relationship it causes questions...But if one endures then that relationship is strengthened...

Think about a marriage: The strongest marriages are not the marriages vacant of problems...The strongest marriage are not the ones that have had it easy or no conflict...

Often the strongest marriage have been tried the most...If a couple can conscious love each other in the face of mistakes and tests, then that couple's marriage tends to get stronger...The marriage relationship weakens though when that conscious decision to love, trust and be joyful is not made...

The Christian faith, the faith I find in the Bible, is a faith that is founded in a relationship with the Creator God that made us and bought us...

Any true relationship...any healthy relationship goes through struggles and doubts....

Friends, questions and the testing of our faith is a natural part of our walk...However, My encouragement is not to just stop at questions and doubts but rather make a conscious decision to pursue the true God in spite of our shaken faith...To maintain the foundation of joy and trust in the Lord while you pursue Him despite the storms of life...

Transition: But friends let us not stop today at verse 3...Because verse 4 answers a very important question...What is the result of endurance?

James 1:4, "And let endurance have *its* perfect result, **so that** you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

Literally, the first phrase in verse 4 says, "And let us continually allow endurance to have *its* perfect ^[f]result, so that you may be ^[g]perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

In other words...All of life's difficulties are working toward something... They are working towards refinement or perfection...

Follow with me really quick the argument in James... Consider it joy in trials...Trials lead to endurance and endurance leads to perfection...Yet in order to find perfection we must not just stop at Step #1 to Consider but we must go on to Step #2:

And Step #2 is found in the Greek command in verse 4... "And let us continually allow endurance have *its* perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing."

Step #2: Allow: How do we endure trials? Step 1 and 2 of 5 are Consider and Allow...

Staff Meeting: To tell you a quick story...As you well know, we have a great staff here...As you know also, I like to present Sunday's text to them on Tuesday staff meetings and gain their thoughts...

One of them said, "Byron, this seems like gold...This seems like refine gold..." I asked her to clarify... "God uses trials to refine and perfect you as a goldsmith uses fire to refine and purify gold..."

She was spot on...

Result:

Look at the result in verse 4, "And let endurance have its perfect result So that you will be perfect and complete lacking in nothing"

"So that" is giving us the **result**...The result of verses 2-4a is perfection...lacking in nothing...

The only two commands in verse 2-4...is first to consider and second is to allow...Allow what? Continue to allow endurance to work so that you may be perfect and complete...lacking in nothing...

Let me put this in other words, Trial after trial...Fire after fire God scoops out impurity after impurity slowly refining us to a more pure state...

God uses trials to sift imperfections out scoop by scoop turning us into a more pure product...A product more useful to His kingdom and a product that looks more like the only perfect product the only perfect person to ever walk this earth...Our Savior Jesus Christ...

But what must we do to become a more perfect product? How do we endure trials?

We must first Consider then Allow...

Transition: As we head more toward closing, I'd like to address three different groups of people...

YOU:

Group #1: The first group of people that are here today are those without hope...without hope of perfection...Without hope of considering or allowing...

Friends, the hope of refinement...The hope of joy in the midst of sorrow...is found only through one man...Jesus Christ...Truly the only source of consistent fulfilling joy in this horrific dark world is found only through Jesus Christ...That's it...

The promises and instructions of Book of James are specifically addressed to Christians...those that hold Jesus the Savior of the World as Lord, Christ and GOD...

If you are without Jesus in your life...If you are without faith in Jesus then you are truly hopeless to overcome trials and hopeless for eternal life...

If you do not have Jesus Christ, then Jesus offers you a free gift...Romans 6:23, says, "For the wages or payment of sin is death but the free gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord..."

I encourage you...If you are sitting out there without Jesus Christ in your life...then I would encourage you to believe...John 3:16 says, "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only son so that whoever believes in Him will have eternal life..." Believe...Say something like this, "I believe in Jesus Christ as my personal Lord and Savior...That He died for my sin and gives me a free gift of heaven...I believe in you...come into my life and change me..."

It is only through Christ that we have hope of heaven, hope of joy, and hope of completeness through trial...If you believed or if you have questions about eternal salvation...then see me after service...

Transition: But there is a second group of people I'd like to talk to this morning...

GROUP #2: Are Christians that have given up...Those that have faced one too many trials...

Those of you who the weight of sorrow and the burden of exhaustion weighing you

down...Perhaps some of you sat down spiritually years ago fearing to get up and continuing walking...

Or, if you are even saying to me this morning... “Ya right Byron... “I am sick and tired of being sick and tired... I don’t want to consider or allow...” If you are sick and tired of being sick and tired then let me share with you...

For weeks following my son’s death...I felt totally defeated and discouraged...Forever wishing away scriptures such as James 1...Yet, in the midst sitting in the ash...fresh with the gloomy image of my son’s funeral burning a hole in my mind and heart...A Dear Friend came alongside me and said...”Byron, you can borrow my faith...” What they meant was to lean on me...and I will help you walk...

Friends, borrow my faith...Borrow your elder’s faith...We are in this together...I do not pretend to understand the trials you have experienced but I stand here to say that you are not alone and that you can borrow my faith...We can lean on one another if you need it to keep walking...

Transition: Group #1: are those without Christ Group #2: are those discouraged to endure...

GROUP #3:

The third group are those seeking to take verses 2-4 and apply to their life...It is to this group that I say “So what? How do I apply these verses to my life?”

How To Endure Trials?

Step #1: Consider and Step #2: to Allow

But how do we Consider? How do I make an intellectual decision to be joyful in the face of great odds?

In order to consider...

Tip #1: We must take a step back...We must take a step back and out of our circumstance and

Tip #2: We get a view of the big picture...

We must take a step back out of our flood of emotions...we must intellectually step outside of our emotions...outside of the overwhelming floods and get a big picture perspective...

We must not just look at our current circumstance but also must remember that God is leading us toward the finish line of perfection...

We must Step #2: Allow...

How do **we allow endurance** to have its perfect result?

Tip #1 We must release control... We must release control... We humans are control freaks and worry warts... In order for endurance to lead us toward perfection we must release control...

Tip #2: We must then persist... Allow God to use trials to refine us to perfection is painful... but friends borrow my faith... borrow one another's faith and persist despite the pain...

GOD:

As I close, let us reflect upon a quote by George Muller (And by someone else...)

"To learn strong faith is to endure great trials. I have learned my faith by standing firm amid severe testings."